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Chairman: Mr. Nasser ..... (Qatar)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/64/20)

1. **Mr. Walzer** (Israel) said that 2009 marked the forty-ninth anniversary of the first manned moon landing, and one could only marvel at the progress achieved since Sputnik had first orbited the Earth over a half century before. However, progress was hard to achieve alone, and international cooperation in the area of space technology was essential, as joining forces assured substantive advances and technological breakthroughs.

2. Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of the Ofeq-1 satellite in September 1988 and had continued to place emphasis on using its technological edge in small, sophisticated satellites, space propulsion, and satellite-based technologies, such as remote sensing. In the past year, the Israeli space industry had consolidated its links with foreign partners and endeavoured to advance a number of projects to benefit the international community as a whole. The joint Franco-Israeli Vegetation and Environment Monitoring New Micro-Satellite (VENUS) cooperative project, would, inter alia, develop an observation micro-satellite, in which multispectral cameras would provide accurate data for monitoring, analysis and modelling of land surface functioning under the influence of environmental factors and human activities. In what was known as precision-farming, the VENUS project would optimize agriculture and aquaculture and would have global ecological applications.

3. He drew attention to the special partnership with the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), including the STS-107 Columbia project and the related Mediterranean-Israel Dust Experiment, in which an Israeli astronaut had studied atmospheric aerosols and the influence of global changes on the climate, as well as helping to coordinate a spectrometer test and spectroradiometer instruments. Although the mission had ended in tragedy, Israel continued to support its partnership with NASA for the betterment of humankind. Another cooperative project was the project to launch an Israeli space telescope on an Indian GEO satellite in 2010, through collaboration between Tel Aviv University and the Indian Institute of Astrophysics. Israel had signed cooperation agreements with several countries and hoped to sign others. It was also currently negotiating a framework agreement for joining the European Space Agency (ESA).

4. The Israeli private sector contributed considerably to the space industry, with over 10 companies producing space products, while many private companies explored technologies for alleviating some of humankind's pressing environmental needs. Israel wished to expand its space cooperation and share its knowledge and expertise with other States and, by so doing, to provide space access to those without independent capacity. His delegation invited scientists, especially from neighbouring countries, to utilize the country's observatory, which was open to all nations. Israel could and should be a platform for bringing States together and enhancing cooperation for the benefit of all. It therefore endorsed the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) to use space-related technologies for improving the quality of life on Earth.

5. **Mr. González** (Chile), commending the efforts of Mr. Arévalo Yepes, who was spending his last General Assembly as Chairman of COPUOS, said that he wished to highlight two forthcoming space-related conferences: the Sixth Space Conference of the Americas, scheduled for Mexico in November 2010, and the Diplomatic Conference, to be held in Chile in July 2010.

6. While he appreciated the work of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, he recommended that it should update its document in so far as it concerned the impact of space technologies on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Also, The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) should be consolidated in a UNISPACE IV, which Chile would like to help organize with the assistance of the regional offices of international organizations, because the link between space technology and the MDGs was crucial. Many years had elapsed since UNISPACE III, which appeared to have been a turning point on relevant issues.

7. The action groups created had produced specific results regarding the developing countries' needs, and the Conference had signalled a move from rhetoric to action, from thinking to commitment, both of them sought by developing countries. But the world had changed enormously since then and the new globalized

world called for further strengthening of capacities. Although Chile was on schedule to meet its MDG targets, it needed the additional strength that space technology provided in order to continue its development efforts in that regard. It was also necessary to strengthen COPUOS, which should also move, once and for all, from words to action.

8. It was vital that the 2010 meetings should hold a serious discussion of the impact of space technology on the MDGs. The 2009 round tables had been marked by the inexplicable — and unexplained — absence of the World Health Organization (WHO), the key agency when it came to the benefits of space technology for health, which had been a great disappointment for his delegation. Panels needed to address the global agenda, for international stability was linked to global public goods. All too often in the United Nations, high-level seminars ended with no tangible conclusion, and were promptly forgotten when delegates returned home.

9. Something similar had occurred in Cartagena de Indias and Ecuador, where, despite the sterling work of the Colombian and Ecuadorian Governments, the collaboration of the United Nations organizations had been exceedingly poor. They were not being asked for favours; they were, after all, the employees of the Member States. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), at the initiative of Argentina, had created a satellite group on outer space which worked well and should be replicated by other international organizations. He requested the Office to update its document in so far as effect of space technologies was concerned.

10. Chile was firmly committed to regional cooperation, especially with regard to the need for greater cooperation in space. He was therefore disappointed by the outright rejection of draft resolution (A/C.4/64/L.4) on the peaceful uses of outer space, which had been submitted jointly by the delegations of Chile and Mexico. He urged all delegations to examine — not only out of mere curiosity, but also out of diplomatic duty — both the preambular and operative paragraphs of that draft resolution and to decide whether it should have been at least discussed in the spirit of solidarity that had emerged from the Space Conference of the Americas.

11. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country, an early member of COPUOS, had constantly supported its work in upholding the fundamental principles of space activities, which stipulated that outer space was the province of all humankind and that all its benefits should be extended to all nations without discrimination. He reiterated his delegation's grave concern at the likelihood of an arms race in outer space, a possibility that called for increased international awareness and preventive efforts.

12. Convinced that space activities and applications played an essential role in the sustainable development of a conscious nation, his Government had worked hard to develop its space programmes, launching its first locally produced satellite launch vehicle (SLV) in 2008, followed months later by the launching of its second sub-orbital rocket. In 2009, its second SLV — produced, from design to launch, by Iranians — had been successfully placed in low Earth orbit (LEO), while a site for further launchings had been established and several student satellite projects had been undertaken under development programmes on space technology.

13. Aware of the importance of international cooperation in space-related activities — especially within the framework of COPUOS — for obtaining optimal benefit from space applications, his country had focused in recent years on holding regional workshops. With the cooperation of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, several workshops and symposiums on space law, the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) and space science and technology had been organized.

14. UN-SPIDER activities for the region had been extensively discussed in a workshop organized by the Iranian Space Agency and held in Tehran in 2008, to be followed by another in November 2009. Asian countries' vulnerability to disasters necessitated implementation of that Platform in the region, given that 91 per cent of all deaths from natural disasters in the past 100 years had occurred in Asia. With that in mind, his country had fully supported the programme since its initiation and had in 2008 expressed its readiness to host its Regional Support Office, for which the cooperation agreement had been signed on 4 June, upon finalization of the discussions between the Iranian authorities and the Office for Outer Space Activities. A network of regional support offices in Asia could provide effective coordination for promoting UN-SPIDER, maximizing its advantages to

all nations in the region for relief operations and protection of life and property from natural disasters.

15. Notwithstanding the substantial contribution of satellite products to human well-being and to all countries' socio-economic development, it was a matter of grave concern that misuse and irresponsible distribution of satellite imaging through the World Wide Web breached individuals' privacy rights, inflicted irreparable damage on human societies and jeopardized the national security of States. Given that such activities disturbed the serenity of all States and societies, an appropriate collective response was required from the international community. Regulation and dissemination of satellite imagery through the World Wide Web had merit and relevance, but must be adequately addressed by related international organizations and the United Nations, particularly COPUOS. Outer space, although a common asset, had great double-edged potential: for good or for evil.

16. **Mr. Ng** Chin Huat (Malaysia) said that his country's second Earth observation satellite, RazakSAT, had been successfully launched on 14 July with assistance from the United States Government and had become the first Earth observation satellite at the near equatorial orbit (NEqO). Using that new facility, Malaysia would pursue its efforts to strengthen international cooperation in disaster management and was willing to share its remote-sensing satellite data with any countries along the Earth's equatorial belt region wishing to use them. That was Malaysia's contribution in support of UN-SPIDER initiatives for helping the world to provide early warning against natural disasters and so reduce loss of life.

17. Malaysia had also supported the celebration of International Heliophysical Year in 2007 and, continuing its commitment, was supporting the International Year of Astronomy 2009. One activity of which his country was proud was magnetic field measurement using the MAGDAS magnetometer located at the Langkawi National Observatory, data from which was channelled to Japanese-led research on global magnetic fields. Malaysia was also collaborating with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in a protein studies experiment on board the Japanese KIBO Module at the International Space Station (ISS), which should have an impact on the oleochemical industry. Malaysia had also joined others in celebrating International Year of Astronomy 2009, striking a commemorative coin and organizing education and awareness-raising activities for the general public.

18. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said, that as a member of COPUOS, his delegation supported its activities to prevent militarization and pollution of space, and the regulation of all space activities. Burkina Faso had neither interstellar ambitions nor any desire for outer space adventure, being concerned only with the numerous and very visible areas in which space research and technology could be of service to development: telecommunications, health, education, disaster management and meteorological forecasting, confirming the importance of outer space as an instrument for social and economic development and for strengthening communication and information media.

19. Unfortunately, even today the developing countries lagged behind, and the transfer of space technologies to those countries was still not a reality, thus exposing them to natural disasters and to the perverse but avertable effects of climate change. Like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso had suffered from major flooding as a direct consequence of climate change, thus underscoring the need for ongoing evaluation and strengthening of disaster-prevention and -management capacities. The developing countries were not only the most vulnerable to climate change, but also paid the heaviest toll when disasters struck, but Africa had taken up the challenge. The important conclusions and recommendations of the Seventh World Forum of Sustainable Development, with climate change at its centre, which had just ended in Burkina Faso, should be of use in the lead-up to the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15).

20. The COP 15 discussions were a reminder of the imperative need for UN-SPIDER to be made operational, and to allow all countries — especially developing countries — to have access to space services. The international community must step up cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space and continue to support the work of COPUOS and its subcommittees and the Office for Outer Space Affairs. All humankind could benefit from that cooperation; it was time for the international community to react and meet new challenges.

21. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) recalled that it was on the fortieth anniversary of perhaps the most significant technological achievement of the era, the lunar landing of Apollo 11, which had provided the first pictures of Earth seen from space. Much attention now was properly focused on the application of space techniques to solving terrestrial problems, but exploration remained an enticing goal, and the United States of America and its partners in the International Space Station programme, and now the NASA Global Exploration Strategy, had built on that legacy.

22. It was also the tenth anniversary of UNISPACE III, the last major United Nations conference of the twentieth century and an organizational and substantive success. The inclusiveness of the Conference, the breadth and emphasis of the issues it had considered had made it highly relevant to both developed and developing countries, and five years later, both governmental and non-governmental bodies had been able to participate in the follow-up while preserving the pivotal role of Member States.

23. COPUOS, as the only standing body of the United Nations concerned with that issue, was a forum for promoting cooperative achievement and sharing of benefits from space exploration. Its Legal Subcommittee had played a key role in the drafting of the primary United Nations treaties on outer space, the framework within which space exploration by nations, international organizations and, now, private entities had flourished. As a result, space technology and services contributed immeasurably to economic growth and an improved quality of life around the world. Yet, notwithstanding their continued relevance, many States had not accepted key treaties, including some members of COPUOS, and his delegation encouraged them to ratify and implement at least the four main treaties. The Legal Subcommittee's consideration of a new item on the national mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation measures complemented the important work already done by COPUOS in that area. In the course of its work on national legislation relevant to the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, it had gathered useful information on how States oversaw their space activities, and its consideration of capacity-building in space law had been equally encouraging.

24. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had also made significant progress on a wide variety of topics. In particular, it had reached consensus on the Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space, subsequently approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems (ICG), which had reported to the Subcommittee on its work, continued to advance compatibility and interoperability among the global and regional space-based systems and the integration of global navigation satellite systems into national infrastructure, particularly in developing countries. The collision between two satellites earlier in the year had generated debris in the low-Earth orbit and had served as an important reminder of the need to ensure a safe space environment. The United States of America had expanded the number of satellites it monitored for risk of collision with other satellites and space debris. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee's new multi-year item on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities would increase awareness of current and future challenges facing governmental and non-governmental space operations, and should result in guidelines for best practices.

25. **Mr. Kalinin** (Russian Federation) said that his country favoured the expansion of dialogue to promote international cooperation for the exploration and peaceful use of outer space and welcomed the increasing interest of other countries in that regard. Outer space technology, such as UN-SPIDER, was an invaluable asset in tackling the problems facing humanity.

26. While he noted that progress had been made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, he believed that further steps still needed to be taken in that area. He commended COPUOS for its productive fifty-second session and welcomed its decision to include two new items on the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, entitled "International Space Weather Initiative" and "Long-term sustainability of outer space activities".

27. As one of the leading countries involved in the peaceful uses of outer space, the Russian Federation was proud of its achievements. For example, it had provided launch services for 40 per cent of all launch vehicles worldwide in 2008. His country also attached a high priority to the implementation of manned space flight programmes and remained committed to its obligations to ensure the successful operation of the International Space Station, where an increasing

number of scientific experiments were being carried out.

28. COPUOS should continue to play a central role in coordinating international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes. In that connection, his delegation supported the further enhancement of its capabilities to elaborate the political and legal foundations for space activities. Outer space must be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. One of the most important tasks before the international community therefore remained the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including through harnessing the full capacity of the United Nations to prevent the militarization of outer space. To that end, the Russian Federation and China had drawn up a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat of or use of force against outer space objects.

29. The discussions held within COPUOS had clearly demonstrated that a number of gaps remained to be filled in terms of the implementation and regulation of space law. In that respect, he reiterated his delegation's proposal for a substantive discussion to be held on the elaboration of a comprehensive United Nations convention on international space law.

30. **Ms. Fogarty** (Australia) observed that the use of satellites in dealing especially with the health impact of climate change was vitally important. Australia's Integrated Marine Observatory System combined in situ and satellite data to model the role of oceans in climate change in the coastal marine environment, a matter of crucial interest to all Pacific countries. A number of reception stations in Australia for satellite remote-sensing data under the System provided access for coastal, ocean and climate applications. The Government was also working to set up the Great Barrier Reef Ocean Observing System, which likewise combined surface and satellite monitors to document variability in the Western Coral Sea.

31. Working with NASA and the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Australia also maintained a Web-based remote-sensing atlas that gave researchers access to ocean-related data — like sea surface temperature — that provided a daily snapshot of a particular circumscribed region.

32. Geoscience Australia, her country's principal Earth resources satellite ground station and data-processing facility, was also working on a range of satellite applications relating to disaster management, environmental monitoring and aquatic remote sensing. One project, for instance, was examining tsunami risk in the South-West Pacific Ocean, using multispectral satellite data to produce detailed bathymetric maps for the coasts of Tonga and the Solomon Islands. The use of a physics-based remote-sensing technique enabled water depth in such shallow coastal areas to be estimated without the need for extensive field work and at a much lower cost than other surveying methods, and also offered advantages over empirical, image-based remote-sensing bathymetry techniques. Another important research project under way relying in part on satellite data was the South-West Pacific Ocean circulation and climate experiment, bringing together scientists from Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand, France, Hawaii and elsewhere in the United States of America.

33. There were, of course, many other ways — such as telemedicine — in which it was becoming essential to use space systems for everyday services. In Australia, using space-based technology to deliver benefits to remote communities was of particular benefit; and no doubt a similar problem was faced by developing countries. In view of its growing dependence on space systems, Australia was working on a national space policy governing their use and devising strategies for using space to meet national priorities and provide the needed space-related education and innovation. Science and research related to space were also important elements of Australia's wider scientific effort. In developing its national space policy, Australia would consider how to advance its international and regional space cooperation and engagement, and how to enhance its domestic capabilities. In the use of Earth-observation data to support activities centred on sustainability and climate change issues, it was important that timely access to remote-sensing data and derived information be provided free of charge or at a reasonable cost; and that capacity be built collaboratively.

34. **Ms. Ihenacho** (Nigeria) said that her delegation welcomed the growing interest in the demilitarization of outer space, which was the common heritage of humanity. The five United Nations treaties on outer space had no doubt contributed immensely to that goal, although the last of them, the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies had, regrettably, not been ratified.

Emphasis should be put on: preventing the testing, deployment and use of weapons of mass destruction, especially in orbit around the Earth and celestial bodies other than the Moon and in outer space; protecting objects in outer space from the use, or the threat of use, of force from Earth; and universal accession to the outer space treaties.

35. The African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Nigeria, which had been recognized as very effective in educating and empowering the people of the country in space science affairs, should be provided with more space law experts who could boost its curriculum.

36. Nigeria would be launching its second Earth-observation satellite in 2010, a high-resolution spacecraft expected to improve the resource mapping of Nigeria and of Africa as a whole, which would also give Nigeria greater input into the work of the Disaster Monitoring Constellation, comprising spacecraft from the United Kingdom, Nigeria, China, Turkey, Algeria and Spain. The NigeriaSat-II would be launched, together with a flight standard training model built by Nigerian engineers and scientists, to demonstrate her country's capabilities in building future satellites.

37. **Mr. Kharytynskyi** (Ukraine) said that the recommendations of UNISPACE III relating to the use of space-based systems in the areas of agriculture, land use, water resource management and disaster management had done much to advance sustainable development, and space-based observations were useful in the efforts to address climate change. The spin-offs of space technology were, furthermore, a powerful engine for technological innovation and growth in both the industrial and service sectors and could usefully be applied to achieve social and humanitarian objectives or to develop national communications infrastructure. Ukraine believed that the convening of a fourth United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space should be discussed, and that the valuable United Nations Programme on Space Applications should, in view of the limited financial resources available, be supported through voluntary contributions.

38. Ukraine's own national space programme for the period 2008-2012 had begun to use Earth observations and space data actively in environmental protection, rescue operations in emergency situations and agricultural production. The programme also envisaged the launching of a national satellite telecommunications system.

39. Peace should be maintained in outer space, through greater transparency in space activities, information-sharing and compliance with international space law, while uncontrolled proliferation of rocket and missile technologies should be opposed. The European Union draft Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities would guarantee access to space for all for peaceful purposes, preserve the security and integrity of space objects in orbit and give due consideration to the legitimate defence interests of States.

40. The use of satellites in medium-Earth orbit had to be further explored under the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (COSPAS-SARSAT). Also, it was important to provide non-discriminatory, timely access to remote-sensing data at reasonable cost, and States should share experiences and technologies in collaborative projects. The concept of data democracy was vital in building the capacities of States.

41. His country continued to carry out research on the problem of space debris, and the use, organization and design of its own space launch vehicles complied with the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC). The recent collision of two satellites in low-Earth orbit demonstrated the increasing risk posed by space debris. There had been a proposal to establish an international data platform on objects in outer space, and certainly information on the existing objects in outer space had to be made available to protect those in operation and to protect people from the re-entry of space debris. The safety, security and predictability of space activities would be further enhanced by codifying best practices and technical norms.

42. His Government welcomed the adoption of the IAEA-endorsed Safety Framework for Nuclear Power Source Applications in Outer Space. The exploitation of the geostationary orbit should be rationalized and all States should have access to it, regardless of their current technical capabilities. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS should continue to discuss the matter.

43. More States and organizations should accede to the United Nations treaties on outer space; and the legal provisions themselves should be improved to

respond to contemporary problems. A new, comprehensive convention on space law, that would in no way undermine the existing space law regime, should be drafted to regulate all aspects of the constantly growing number of space activities. The sharing of information on national legislation could help identify common principles and procedures, facilitating consensus on how international space law should be developed. The work of international organizations also contributed significantly to the development of space law. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs had developed a curriculum on space law to be taught by the regional centres for space science and technology education, which had to be furnished with adequate expertise and resources.

Agenda item 29: Effects of atomic radiation (*continued*) (A/C.4/64/L.8)

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.8 on the effects of atomic radiation (continued)

44. **Mr. Bowman** (Canada), informing the Committee that the sponsors had been joined by Argentina, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, India, Lithuania and Pakistan, pointed out that there was a typographical error in paragraph 14 that should be corrected: the word "full" should be deleted before the word "membership". Also, since that same paragraph called for a decision by the end of the current session, the agenda item should be left open until that time.

45. **The Chairman**, noting that the draft resolution had no budget implications, said he took it that the Committee, in view of the consensus on the text before it, wished to suspend the 24-hour rule regarding adoption of draft resolutions.

46. *It was so decided.*

47. **Mr. Rodríguez** (Peru), speaking in explanation of position before action was taken on the draft resolution, said that while it was time to reconsider the composition of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the addition of new members should not work to the detriment of currently active members; and until the financial constraints were resolved, paragraphs 13 and 14 could be taken to refer only to the incorporation of new members when a current member decided voluntarily to resign. The criteria for membership had to be developed through a calm and constructive dialogue and should reflect the Organization's diversity as to the stages of development of Member States and their geographical location. With those understandings, Peru would join the consensus.

48. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.8, as orally revised, was adopted.*

49. **Ms. Pessôa** (Brazil), speaking in explanation of position after the adoption of the draft resolution, said it was her delegation's understanding that the criteria for membership referred to in paragraph 13 must be based on the ability of Member States to contribute actively to the Scientific Committee's work and on equitable geographical representation — a principal operative in the previous enlargement of membership — while securing the participation of scientists from developing countries. It was also its understanding that the General Assembly would not be taking a decision on whether or not the membership would include current observer countries and that the decision would by no means be a re-examination of the entire membership of the Committee.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.